

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 10179 01 OF 03 261511Z

50

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 NIC-01 ARA-16 OMB-01 EB-11 TRSE-00 SAI-01

DRC-01 /131 W

----- 075667

R 261115Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8645

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 10179

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH ELECTIONS: GENERAL BILLOTTE'S VIEWS

1. SUMMARY: ON APRIL 25, GENERAL PIERRE BILLOTTE, UDR DEPUTY, HEAD OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FRANCO-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP GROUP, AND PRESIDENT OF FEDERATION OF LEFT-WING GAULLISTS, CAME TO EMBASSY TO GIVE ME HIS ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION PROSPECTS. HE HAD SEEN CHABAN-DELMAS JUST BEFORE, AND PLEAD CHABAN'S CASE, CLEARLY WITH LATTER'S AUTHORIZATION. WITH EITHER MITTERRAND OR GISCARD IN ELYSEE, BILLOTTE FEARS A DIVIDED FRANCE. ONLY CHABAN CAN HOLD SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE TOGETHER. SOVIETS AND ARABS PREFER CHABAN. JOBERT WILL SUPPORT HIM AND CHABAN WILL FOLLOW SUBSTANCE OF POMPIDOU-JOBERT FOREIGN POLICY. HOWEVER, ATTITUDE TOWARD US WOULD BE MORE FRIENDLY, WITH FULL AND TIMELY CONSULTATIONS  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 10179 01 OF 03 261511Z

CARRIED OUT INFORMALLY AND DISCREETLY. THEY COULD

NOT BE FORMALIZED IN PUBLIC DOCUMENT, LEST FRENCH  
BELIEVE THEIR INDEPENDENCE COMPROMISED. END SUMMARY.

2. ADVERTING TO HIS LONG FRIENDSHIP AND ASSOCIATION  
WITH THE US, BILLOTTE SAID IT HAD BEEN HIS CUSTOM  
TO DISCUSS FRENCH DOMESTIC SCENE WITH AMERICAN  
AMBASSADORS IN "TROUBLED TIMES." HE MENTIONED  
SEVERAL INSTANCES, INCLUDING ONCE IN 1958 --  
WHEN "FRANCE WAS ON THE VERGE OF CIVIL WAR" -- WITH  
AMORY HOUGHTON. THE RESULT, HE SAID, WAS A PUBLIC  
STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT EISENHOWER TO EFFECT THAT HE  
"LIKED GENERAL DE GAULLE."

3. ONCE AGAIN, BILLOTTE IS TROUBLED BY FRENCH  
SITUATION. FRANCE HAS LONG HISTORY OF "FRAGILITY."  
A RARE EXCEPTION -- WHEN STABILITY HAD REIGNED -- WAS  
1958-1968. AGAIN, FOLLOWING MAY 1968 UPHEAVAL,  
STABILITY WAS RESTORED UNTIL 1972 -- WHEN POMPIDOU  
BEGAN HIS SLOW DECLINE. PROOF OF THIS DECLINE IN  
JUDGMENT AND POLITICAL ACUMEN WAS THAT HE  
SUCCUMBED TO BLANDISHMENTS OF GISCARD AND "OTHER  
CONSERVATIVES," WHOSE BUSINESS CLIENTS WERE UNHAPPY  
WITH CHABAN'S ADVANCED "NEW SOCIETY" SOCIAL PROGRAMS,  
TO FIRE CHABAN. CHOICE OF MESSMER TO SUCCEED  
CHABAN CONFIRMED POMPIDOU'S FAILING STATECRAFT.

4. DISMISSING OTHER NINE CANDIDATES AS NOT SERIOUS,  
BILLOTTE THEN ANALYZED CANDIDACIES OF MITTERRAND,  
GISCARD D'ESTAING AND CHABAN-DELMAS.

5. BILLOTTE SAID HE HAD KNOWN MITTERRAND FOR MANY  
YEARS. CAPTURED IN 1940, MITTERRAND OBTAINED HIS  
RELEASE FROM GERMAN POW CAMP BY AGREEING TO RETURN  
TO FRANCE TO ORGANIZE COLLABORATIONIST STUDENTS,  
WHICH HE PROCEEDED TO DO IN EARLY OCCUPATION YEARS.  
JUST PRIOR TO LIBERATION, HE JOINED THE RESISTANCE.  
AFTER THE WAR, HIS POLITICAL CAREER MOVED FROM  
MILITANCY ON THE RIGHT TO THE CENTER AND NOW INTO  
AN ALLIANCE TO GOVERN WITH THE COMMUNISTS. THIS  
CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED EXTENT OF HIS POLITICAL  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 10179 01 OF 03 261511Z

CONVICTIONS, STRESSED BILLOTTE. MITTERRAND CLAIMS  
HE CAN HANDLE THE COMMUNISTS, WHICH DEMONSTRATES HE  
IS EITHER NAIVE OR A LIAR. BILLOTTE BELIEVES THE  
LATTER. IF ELECTED, MITTERRAND WILL HAVE TO GIVE  
SEVEN OF SIXTEEN MINISTERIAL POSITIONS TO COMMUNISTS,  
WHICH WOULD PERFORCE INCLUDE IMPORTANT POSTS. THIS  
WOULD ENABLE THE COMMUNISTS TO TAKE CONTROL OF  
IMPORTANT SEGMENTS OF THE STATE'S APPARATUS. THIS

"TAKEOVER", COMBINED WITH THEIR SUPERBLY ORGANIZED PARTY MILITANTS, PARA-COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS, ETC., WOULD BE THE BEGINNING OF COMMUNIST TAKEOVER SIMILAR TO SUBVERSION OF EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES 25 YEARS AGO. MITTERRAND WOULD BE POWERLESS TO PREVENT THIS. FURTHER, THESE EVENTS WOULD ONCE AGAIN DIVIDE FRANCE, WITH AN ASSURED HOSTILE (IF NOT VIOLENT) OPPOSITION REACTION. ECONOMIC RESULTS WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC,

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 10179 02 OF 03 261516Z

50

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 NIC-01 OMB-01 EB-11 TRSE-00 SAJ-01

DRC-01 /131 W

----- 075714

R 261115Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8646

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 10179

WITH ENORMOUS CAPITAL FLIGHT, AND INEVITABLE "TOTALITARIAN" COUNTER-MEASURES OF MITTERRAND GOVERNMENT -- RIGID EXCHANGE CONTROLS, BLOCKED ACCOUNTS, ETC.

6. BILLOTTE CHARACTERIZED GISCARD AS RESOURCEFUL

AND INTELLIGENT, BUT NOT SUFFICIENTLY SEASONED FOR THE PRESIDENCY. UNFORTUNATELY, BECAUSE OF HIS BACKGROUND AND HIS IMAGE (IN PART, UNFAIR), GISCARD APPEARED TO THE WORKING CLASS AS PROTECTOR OF ESTABLISHED PRIVILEGE AND BUSINESS INTERESTS. HIS CAMPAIGN SOCIAL PROGRAMS ARE "PASSE" AND REVEAL ALL TOO CLEARLY TO THE WORKERS THAT GISCARD WILL NOT STAND UP FOR THEIR INTERESTS. BILLOTTE SAID HE UNDERSTANDS ATTITUDE OF THE WORKING CLASS, SINCE HE REPRESENTS A DISTRICT IN THE "RED BELT"

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 10179 02 OF 03 261516Z

AND IS IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH WORKERS, UNIONS, SHOP STEWARDS, ETC., IF ELECTED, GISCARD'S POLICIES WOULD PROVOKE DIVISIVENESS IN FRENCH SOCIETY, WITH RESULTANT STRIKES, FACTORY SIT-INS, CAPITAL FLIGHT, ETC.

7. IN BILLOTTE'S VIEW, ONLY CHABAN-DELMAS COULD, AS PRESIDENT OF FRANCE, RECONCILE DIVERSE ELEMENTS OF FRENCH SOCIETY AND MAINTAIN STABILITY, SOCIAL PROGRESS AND ORDERLY ECONOMIC GROWTH. AS RESULT OF HIS ADVANCED "NEW SOCIETY" SOCIAL PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY HIS POLICY OF CONCERTATION WITH THE UNIONS, CHABAN WOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF FRANCE TOGETHER.

8. AS FOR FOREIGN POLICY, ALTHOUGH ALL THREE MAJOR CANDIDATES PROCLAIM FRIENDSHIP FOR THE UNITED STATES, ONLY GISCARD AND CHABAN ARE "TRUE FRIENDS" OF AMERICA. HOWEVER, WARNED BILLOTTE, GISCARD, AND CHABAN PARTICULARLY, ARE SENSITIVE TO FACT THAT 65 OF THE FRENCH ELECTORATE SUPPORTS POMPIDOU-JOBERT FOREIGN POLICY. LESS THAN AN HOUR BEFORE COMING TO SEE ME, BILLOTTE SAID CHABAN TOLD HIM THAT HE SUPPORTED JOBERT'S POLICY AND WOULD MAINTAIN THE POMPIDOU-JOBERT LINE IF ELECTED. (IN FACT, JOBERT DID COME OUT ON MORNING OF APRIL 26 IN SUPPORT OF CHABAN.) HOWEVER, CHABAN TOLD BILLOTTE HE WOULD CARRY OUT FRANCE'S FOREIGN POLICY MORE GRACIOUSLY AND WITH A GREATER SENSE OF COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP WITH THE U.S. CHABAN PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZED TO BILLOTTE THAT THE UNITED STATES COULD COUNT ON "FULL AND TIMELY" CONSULTATION AND CONCERTATION. THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE INFORMALLY AND DISCREETLY, HOWEVER. IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO BE FORMALIZED IN PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, FOR THIS WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY THE FRENCH PEOPLE AS "BETRAYAL OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE."

9. AS A RESULT OF HIS LEFT-WING GAULLIST TIES,  
BILLOTTE IS IN CONTACT WITH EASTERN EUROPEAN EMBASSIES.  
HE IS ALSO IN CONTACT WITH ARAB MISSIONS. THEIR  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 10179 02 OF 03 261516Z

UNANIMOUS ORDER OF PREFERENCE FOR PRESIDENCY IS:  
CHABAN, GISCARD AND MITTERRAND. SOVIETS AND OTHER  
EASTERN EUROPEANS DO NOT WANT MITTERRAND AS PRESIDENT  
OF FRANCE FOR FEAR IT WOULD PROVOKE RETURN TO "COLD  
WAR" ATMOSPHERE IN EUROPE. SOVIETS ARE PARTICULARLY  
ATTACHED TO THE PRESENT PEACEFUL EQUILIBRIUM. THEY  
PLACE PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE ON RELATIONS WITH U.S.  
A MITTERRAND PRESIDENCY COULD HAVE A DESTABILIZING  
EFFECT, STIMULATING FEAR IN WEST GERMANY, WITH THE  
POSSIBLE RESULT THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE  
OBLIGED TO ARM THE FRG WITH ATOMIC WEAPONS. ON THE  
OTHER HAND, THE SOVIETS DO NOT WISH A WESTERN  
EUROPE DOMINATED BY THE U.S., FOR THIS WOULD BE AN  
ADVANTAGE TO THE AMERICAN SIDE IN ITS  
RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW. HOWEVER, THEY PREFER PRESENT  
STABILITY, WITH SOME U.S. INFLUENCE TO REVOLUTIONARY  
SITUATION LEADING TO A COMMUNIST WESTERN EUROPE,  
WHICH IN ADDITION TO DESTABILIZING EFFECTS WOULD  
PREVENT ACHIEVEMENT OF SOVIET ECONOMIC/TECHNOLOGICAL  
GOALS.

10. ADVERTING TO PRESS SPECULATION THAT GISCARD IS  
THE PREFERRED CANDIDATE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, I  
STRESSED THAT U.S. POSITION ON FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTIONS IS ONE OF STRICT NEUTRALITY, LOW-PROFILE  
AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF  
FRANCE. IT WOULD NOT BE IN U.S. INTEREST TO GET

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 10179 03 OF 03 261516Z

50  
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 NIC-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 EB-11

DRC-01 /131 W

----- 075774

R 261115Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8647

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 10179

INVOLVED; IN FACT, SUPPORT FOR A CANDIDATE COULD BOOMERANG AGAINST HIM. HOWEVER, I SAID I KNEW CHABAN-DELMAS AND BELIEVED I HAD A GOOD RAPPORT WITH HIM. BILLOTTE SAID HE AGREED SUCH WAS THE RIGHT ATTITUDE FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN. HOWEVER, HE SAID, IF THE RUMOR ABOUT U.S. SUPPORT FOR GISCARD WERE TO GAIN IMPORTANCE, IT WOULD PERHAPS BE USEFUL FOR THE U.S. TO DENY OFFICIALLY AND EXPLAIN ITS POSITION. I THOUGHT AT PRESENT THIS SEEMED UNNECESSARY AS IT MIGHT HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT OF THE ONE INTENDED, CALL ATTENTION TO THE RUMOR AND FEED SPECULATION. IN ANY EVENT, WE BOTH AGREED IT WAS NOT A PROBLEM FOR THE MOMENT.

11. ELECTION PROSPECTS: BILLOTTE SAID HE  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 10179 03 OF 03 261516Z

BELIEVED CHABAN WOULD WIN, BUT HE WAS NOT SURE. IT WOULD BE VERY CLOSE. GISCARD IS SOMEWHAT AHEAD IN THE POLLS, BUT CHABAN'S CAMPAIGN IS NOW GETTING UNDERWAY. WITH 400,000 MILITANTS, FEDERATIONS IN ALL DEPARTMENTS, SEVERAL HUNDRED PROVINCIAL MEETINGS ORGANIZED, CHABAN WOULD NOW BEGIN TO ROLL. THE MAJORITY OF DISSIDENT GAULLISTS (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CHIRAC) -- AT LEAST 75 -- HAD RALLIED TO CHABAN'S CAUSE. HE COULD BE COUNTED ON TO CONDUCT A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN.

12. COMMENT: FOREGOING CONVEYS BILLOTTE'S OWN  
OPINIONS. OUR ANALYSIS OF THE THREE CANDIDACIES  
WILL FOLLOW IN DUE COURSE.  
IRWIN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PERSONAL OPINION, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION FORECASTS, ELECTION CANDIDATES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 APR 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GarlanWA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974PARIS10179  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740099-0728  
**From:** PARIS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740411/aaaaajag.tel  
**Line Count:** 336  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 7  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GarlanWA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 28 MAR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <28 MAR 2002 by morefirh>; APPROVED <28 MAR 2003 by GarlanWA>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FRENCH ELECTIONS: GENERAL BILLOTTE'S VIEWS  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, FR, (BELLOTTE, PIERRE)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005